

Kevin goes Boom (mini-boom anyway) on gravel between Montebello & Page Mill

Did I ride Thursday? Well, sort of. I'd really not gotten much sleep the previous night, concerned about my wife's recent "upgrade" (in a bad way) to her cancer battle. I got out there, along with Kevin & Kevin (younger Kevin & older ex-pilot), but my heart just wasn't in it. Normally I can ride well without much sleep, but this was a lot worse. It was tough just convincing myself not to turn back half-way up, but if I had, there was no way to get notice to Kevin & Kevin, who were way up ahead of me. So I kept on riding, slowly, eventually making it to the top. I let them know what was going on and headed back down the hill, while Kevin & Kevin did the usual ride, and then some.

Fortunately, by today (Sunday), my head was in a better place. The original plan was to head out to the coast, do the traditional Pescadero/Tunitas loop, but the forecast was off and I woke up to fog and much colder temps than expected! Kevin wasn't happy about leaving half an hour later than expected, but I really didn't want to have to wear full-finger gloves & a base layer. We skipped on the coast, since, if it was overcast in Redwood City, what would it be like in Pescadero?

I floated a few ideas to Kevin, including heading up Old LaHonda, south on Skyline, and then down 9/Redwood Gulch. Or... UP Redwood Gulch and north on Skyline. The latter was the top option but not something Kevin really wanted to do (nor I!), so I came up with another idea. Up Montebello to the top, where it turns to dirt, and then head back down and basically retrace our steps home. That idea won out. Not saying Kevin was a fan, but it had been ages (not since 2011) since we'd been up Montebello, so it was time.

We refueled at the Peets in Los Altos, did the mandatory check to see if our former Los Altos location had been rented out yet (it hasn't... something like 6 years it's been empty?), and headed out to Montebello. Shortly after turning onto it a familiar face from the wayback days caught up to us, James P (I met up with him on Ventoux in France quite a few years ago) and we got to talk about his exploits at PBP (Paris-Brest-Paris, a timed endurance ride). OK, not really we... Kevin and James rode on ahead. This was James' recovery ride, so he only rode up as far as the school and then turned around.

We got to the top, eventually (I'm quite a bit slower than I was in 2011, which was just about the time Kevin was getting very strong and fast). There's a gate where the paved road turns to dirt, and we decided to explore a bit past that, maybe get to the actual top of the climb. We did that, and then Kevin figured he really didn't want to turn around and head back home via the foothills; it made more sense to him to ride the gravel roads to Page Mill. On our road bikes. On 25c tires optimized for speed, not durability.

Surprisingly, the tires held up fine. Note to self- need to write something up about how strong the Bontrager R3 tires are! There were a few places where the gravel was thick enough, or the road rough enough, that we had to stop and walk for a very short distance, but overall, it's surprising what you can do with inappropriate equipment. And I can see the attraction of not having to worry about car traffic too, not just any danger that might use but it's also so much quieter out there.

Of course, all good things eventually come to an end, and for Kevin, that meant a low-speed crash (seen in the video above) a very short distance before the end of the gravel section. Small cut and a bit of a banged up leg but of course the important thing is that the bike is fine, right? He washed out the cut at the water spot near the top of Page Mill. By the way, I had thought the road from Montebello came out towards the very top of Page Mill; I really wasn't expecting to have to do that last very steep pitch near the park.

Overall I had a good time and I think Kevin would have thought the same, if not for his crash.